Transferring forests to central list

1649. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that in the workshop "Media Plan for Promotion of Forest Cover in the country", held recently in Bhopal, it was suggested that forests should be transferred from the Concurrent to the Central list as this would be better technically, administratively and legally and would further help in protecting the forests; and

(b) if so, whether Government are contemplating such a change and what is the time-frame for the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) During the workshop on 'Media Plan for Promotion of Forest Cover in the Country' organized at Indian Institute of Forest Management, Bhopal on 22nd June 2004, a suggestion to transfer forests from Concurrent list to Central list was cursorily made.

(b) No, Sir. There is no such proposal under consideration of the Central Government.

Sewri-Nava link project

1650. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Maharashtra had submitted a proposal for a Link (Sewri-Nava Link project) connecting Mumbai to the Mainland in order to reduce congestion in the Island city, for environmental clearance;

(b) if so, the steps taken so far for clearance of the project and the extent of cost escalation suffered by the project due to this delay;

(c) whether decision has since been taken to accord due clearance of the project; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The clarifications required for appraising the proposal for grant of environmental clearance were received from the Government of Maharashtra on 4.12.2004 and the proposal has already been appraised by the Expert Committee on Infrastructure Development and Miscellaneous Projects constituted by this Ministry during its meeting held on 9-12-2004.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The recommendations of the Expert Committee require the approval of the competent authority before granting environmental clearance.

Environment Courts

1651. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Law Commission has recommended for constituting Environment Courts in the States;

(b) whether Government has also recommended for appointing retired judges as supervisors and are assisted by experts to deal with the cases pertaining to environment;

(c) if so, the details of the recommendation made by the Law Commission; and

(d) what action Government have taken or proposed to take on those recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The Law Commission, in it's 186th Report, has *inter alia* recommended establishment of separate 'Environment Courts' in each State, consisting of judicial and scientific experts in the field of environment, for dealing with environmental disputes besides having appellate jurisdiction in respect of appeals under the various Pollution control Laws. The Commission has also recommended for repeal of the National Environment Tribunal Act, 1995 and the National Environmental Appellate Authority Act, 1997. The recommendations of the report are under consideration.